

To: Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and members of the Public Health Committee  
From: Joni Arvai, Director of Government Relations  
Re: SB 258, An Act Prohibiting The Use Of Trans Fat In Connecticut Food Service Establishments  
Date: February 14, 2007

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**American Heart Association Position Points on Local and State Regulation of Trans Fats**

**AHA's dietary recommendations limit the intake of trans fat to one percent of daily intake. If AHA has already established this recommendation, why isn't the organization "leading the charge" to ban trans fats in American restaurants?**

- Food code regulations that ban the use of trans fats in restaurants is one of several strategies that may contribute to achieving the goal of reduced trans fat consumption in the American diet.
- The American Heart Association is concerned that a mandatory ban of trans fats in restaurants, if unaccompanied by effective education and guidance for those restaurants, may potentially lead to unintended and adverse consequences if restaurants switch to the use of "unhealthy oil products" at times when healthier oils are in short supply. For frying and spreads, "unhealthy oil products" are oils where the saturated fat content per serving (based on the nutrition facts panel on the label) is greater than or equal to the saturated content of the original oil. For baking, "unhealthy oil products" are oils where the saturated fat content per serving (based on the nutrition facts panel on the label) is greater than or equal to the saturated plus trans fat content of the original oil.
- We believe that a long-term, comprehensive strategy on trans fat reduction – one that includes an adequate period of phase-in along with education and guidance– is most likely to achieve the goal of reduced trans fats.
- The American Heart Association recommends that the following suggestions be seriously considered:
  - > Provide for a gradual phase-in use of safe alternative products to ensure that the supply chain can keep up with the anticipated increase in demand.
  - > Provide exemptions for restaurants if governing agencies confirm that healthier oil alternatives are not available in sufficient amounts or there is a disruption in supply.
  - > Prohibit substitution of trans fat with other unhealthy oil products.
  - > Provide the industry with specific guidance on which cooking oils to use and how to incorporate them and trans fat-free shortenings into their food preparation processes.
- The comprehensive strategy we envision involves consumer education and timely collaboration among all those involved in the multiple components of the food supply chain, including nutrition scientists, food technologists and chemists, food manufacturers, restaurant professionals, agriculture and oil processing industries, distributors and government and regulatory staff.
- Restaurants can and should be part of the solution in the campaign to reduce trans fat consumption and improve the health of the American people. One way we can engage restaurants in this important mission is to provide them with the specific and tailored guidance they need to remove artificial trans fat from the products they make and serve. Restaurants, particularly individually-owned and small chains, will require time and guidance to use the portfolio of oils and other fats effectively and meet the needs for frying and baking in their establishments.
- The most important message for consumers right now is to limit trans and saturated fats and cholesterol by following a healthy overall dietary pattern that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods, fat free and low fat dairy products, lean meats, poultry and fish twice a week. By following this pattern, trans and saturated fat consumption will be reduced.

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